Greetings friends,

We all learned a lot about flexibility in 2020. In 2021 the Saint Paul Downtown Alliance entered its fourth year ready for anything, with a campaign designed to welcome workers and visitors back downtown. By putting a premium on collaboration and remaining nimble, the Alliance led downtown’s response to the pandemic in a way that we are extremely proud of.

While we didn’t see the full return to office that we’d hoped for in 2021, our efforts had a tremendous impact. We were able to collectively rally around the goal of welcoming and encouraging people back downtown. We also collaborated with dozens of partner organizations to put on hundreds of events and activations for thousands of people.

Another huge milestone in 2021 was the launch (years in the making) of the Saint Paul Downtown Improvement District (SPDID), which went into effect on January 1. This is a private sector-led effort to increase safety, vibrancy and cleanliness in downtown, and Saint Paul’s first Special Service District. During its first year, the SPDID operationalized the SafetyComms network, a robust communications and information-sharing program among downtown buildings and public safety partners. It also deployed Street Team Ambassadors who are highly visible downtown, picking up trash, removing graffiti and helping visitors with wayfinding, all while acting as another safety partner. It also deployed Street Team Ambassadors who are highly visible downtown, picking up trash, removing graffiti and helping visitors with wayfinding, all while acting as another

In 2021, downtown’s residential population surpassed 10,000 for the first time, thanks to hundreds of new housing units coming online. We estimate that throughout 2021 roughly 35% - 40% of downtown workers returned to the office, while many continued working from home offices. As we continue to monitor permanent changes brought on by COVID-19, it will be especially important to track not only the total number of jobs, but also trends in how people work in downtown.

Despite the pandemic’s impact on various aspects of downtown’s economy, overall property values and investments increased substantially in 2021. Changes in office usage patterns will continue to evolve over the next several years.

The extension of the Capital City Bikeway down 9th Street connected more amenities across downtown and more of its adjacent neighborhoods. A lack of daily commuters slashed public transit usage.

Thank you,

REBECCA NOECKER, Saint Paul City Council
JOE NAYQUONABE, JR., Saint Paul Port Authority
JAMES MCCLEAN, CapitolRiver Council
JEANNE CRAIN, Bremer Bank
TONI CARTER, Ramsey County Board of Commissioners
CHARLIE ZELLE, Metropolitan Council
B. KYLE, Chairman and CEO Saint Paul Downtown Alliance
MATT MAJKA, Treasurer
CHRIS HILGER, Chairman and CEO Saint Paul Downtown Alliance

2021 FINANCIALS

$3,055,027

SPONSORSHIP 3%
PRIVATE SECTOR 25%
PUBLIC SECTOR 35%
PHILANTHROPY 30%

$1,055,027

RECOVERY CAMPAIGN 35%
OPERATIONS & ADMIN 14%
SPONSORED CONTRACT 16%

10,300 RESIDENTS
6,715 HOUSING UNITS
55,137 WORKERS

$65.2M TAX REVENUE
$4.5B PROPERTY VALUE
$149M BUILDING PERMITS
13.7M SQUARE FEET OFFICE OCCUPIED

2021 saw ongoing fluctuations and challenges for our small business community. The downtown restaurant and retail map created in 2020 continued to be a valuable asset not only for workers and visitors returning downtown, but for keeping a pulse on new businesses opening like Bullvino’s Steakhouse, k’s hideaway, and more.

TRACKING BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT

In Development
Recently Completed
Under Construction

HIGHER THAN 2019-20
LOWER THAN 2019-20

1,874 HOUSING UNITS
685 HOTEL ROOMS
2.8M+ COMMERCIAL SQUARE FEET

30%
66%
14%

16%
8%
12%
6%

TRAVELERS
DAILY LRT RIDES
DAILY BUS RIDES

94 WALK SCORE
84 BIKING SCORE

SCORE 94

ADVOCATION & DEVELOPMENT

Public safety continued to be an important issue for downtown stakeholders. In addition to hosting monthly public safety check-in calls to hear updates from all of downtown’s public safety and law enforcement partners, the Alliance also lobbied for more than half a million federal American Rescue Plan dollars to be directed toward additional and clean resources in downtown.

Long-term goals of driving more vitality into downtown Saint Paul remain core to the mission of the Alliance. Advocacy is an important strategic initiative that ranges from short-term priorities of improving public safety needs and assisting businesses with permitting or events, to long-term advocacy with economic development partners to prioritize investments and opportunities in downtown essential to city-wide and regional health.

ADVOCATING FOR DOWNTOWN

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The Alliance partnered with Gophers 2021 to host a month-long love and safety event for the campus to both celebrate diversity and promote it.

After a crazy NHL season, we were ready to welcome playoff hockey.
EVENTS EVERY DAY, IN ALL CORNERS OF DOWNTOWN

We made a promise to deliver 300 events and activations to safely welcome workers and visitors back to downtown Saint Paul. We ended up supporting, promoting and hosting a total of 344 events. Hundreds of thousands of people attended #WelcomeBackStPL events large and small in 2021. From old favorites like Lowertown Sounds and Jazz Fest to new activities like Rosé Fest, Roller Disco and Party in the Park, from outdoor fitness classes to pop-up concerts and more, we worked hard to get folks back into the swing of things.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCING StPL

In 2021, the Alliance launched the StPL brand, most visibly in the form of the giant StPL letters monument, which appeared in countless photos and videos across social media. The new brand has been years in the making and comes after more than 15,000 downtown workers, residents, and visitors weighed in.

AROUND (DOWN)TOWN NEWSLETTER

Workers and residents continue to rely on our weekly newsletter for news, events, and updates about downtown. Total subscribers jumped 35% this year, with 81% more new subscribers than 2020.

EVENTS & ACTIVATIONS

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

By programming downtown every day of the week, morning, afternoon and evening we were able to attract a wide variety of event-goers. Morning fitness classes were frequented by early rising residents, lunch time buskers at the Science Museum welcomed families, happy hour music and performances on 7th Place and Ecolab Plaza enchanted those working downtown to linger a little longer.

#WELCOMEBACKSTPL

The #WelcomeBackStPL digital campaign featured more than 40 downtown insiders – elected officials, artists, local historians, business owners and everyone in between – in 58 videos sharing their favorite downtown stories, places and more, receiving two million combined impressions and tens of thousands of views. Nordy brought us to Heimie’s for a pre-game shave and haircut. No mullets were hurt during the filming of his video.

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SAFE & CLEAN

SAINT PAUL’S FIRST IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A core mission of the Saint Paul Downtown Alliance was to work with downtown property owners and managers to determine the feasibility of establishing the first Special Service District (more commonly referred to as a Business or Downtown Improvement District) in the city. After three years of research, a 90-day pilot program in 2019, and a global pandemic nearly derailing efforts, a dedicated steering committee of property owners petitioned their peers for support and created the Saint Paul Downtown Improvement District.

The SPDID took effect on January 1, 2021. It includes the Safety Communications Center (SCC), which connects the various downtown public safety resources; the Street Team Ambassadors, who work in the public realm to keep downtown clean and offer assistance wherever needed; and the Director of Safety Strategies to oversee the program and work with downtown stakeholders.

SAFETYCOMMS NETWORK

During its first year the SPDID built out and operationalized the SafetyComms network, a robust communications and information-sharing channel among downtown buildings and public safety partners. Prior to 2021, nothing of its kind had existed in downtown. The SCC and SafetyComms network have assisted in deploying the Street Team to deescalate situations, coordinating with the Saint Paul Police Department to monitor issues that arise and proactively engaging with downtown stakeholders to improve downtown safety perceptions and outcomes.

MAINTAINING A DOWNTOWN THAT IS CLEAN, SAFE AND FRIENDLY

In 2021 the Alliance and the SPDID were able to leverage more than $500,000 of additional, one-time federal relief funds from the City to add 14 more Street Team Ambassadors to the staff – more than quadrupling their impact. The Street Team helped thousands of visitors, provided outreach referrals more than 600 times and removed nearly 2,500 bags of litter.

In June, July and August of 2021, downtown Saint Paul crime rates hit a five-year low, thanks to efforts from and supplemental federal resources for the SPDID and coordination amongst SPPD, outreach organizations, and all public safety partners. During that same time, the overall crime rate in downtown was 23% lower than 2020, and 10% lower than the five-year average.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

George became a member of the Street Team after working as a volunteer with one of downtown’s outreach partners.

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INVESTORS

ANDREW AND ELLEN REEHER
ALLINA HEALTH
BREMER BANK
BLACKBAUD
BWBR

CITY OF SAINT PAUL
DISTRICT ENERGY SAINT PAUL
ECOLAB
HEALTHPARTNERS
JOHN & RUTH HUSS
KNIGHT FOUNDATION
LARSON KING

M HEALTH FAIRVIEW
MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION
MILLE LACS CORPORATE VENTURES
MINNESOTA WILD
ORDWAY THEATRE
OSBORN370

PAK PROPERTIES
RAMSEY COUNTY
ST. PAUL AREA CHAMBER
SAINT PAUL PORT AUTHORITY
SAINT PAUL & MINNESOTA FOUNDATIONS

ST. PAUL SAINTS
SECURIAN FINANCIAL
TRAVELERS
TKDA
US BANK
XCEL ENERGY